



EVIDENCE PRESENTATION



For the Modern Attorney

Presented by:

The United States District Court

Middle District of Alabama

The Honorable W. Keith Watkins, Chief

Judge Debra P. Hackett, Clerk of Court



In a continuing effort to keep pace with the latest technology, the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama has installed electronic evidence presentation systems in all District and Magistrate Judge Courtrooms.

The evidence presentation system will allow for the display of evidence throughout the courtroom on various monitors located at the bench, witness stand, the lectern, counsel tables and, when necessary, the jury box and the gallery. This innovative technology will eliminate the cumbersome process of handling paper evidence, with its inherent difficulties.

This guide does not provide a complete training package, but rather provides basic information on the components of the evidence presentation system as well as examples of how it may be used. Attorneys planning to use the equipment for court proceedings are encouraged to contact court staff for additional training, as well as practice sessions and testing of equipment. Please note, practice sessions and testing *must* occur prior to the day of a scheduled court proceeding, as the courtroom will not be available the day of the proceeding.

While this guide will provide you with a better understanding of the new technology, it in no way includes all possible ways in which the system might be used. That is limited only by your imagination ...

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

The electronic evidence presentation system in the District and Magistrate Judge courtrooms includes the following:



- ◆ An evidence presentation lectern equipped with a document camera, monitor capable of annotation, microphone, VCR, computer, and auxiliary inputs for connecting a laptop or individual audio/visual equipment such as a compact disk player, DVD player, audio cassette player or a video camera.
- ◆ A monitor capable of annotation at the witness stand which, with the annotation monitor on the lectern, will allow both counsel and witness to make notes on displayed exhibits.
- ◆ Two sets of counsel tables, each equipped with evidence monitors, microphones and wired Internet connections.
- ◆ Wireless microphones — hand-held and lapel.
- ◆ Infrared headphones for use in assistive listening (amplified sound) as well as simultaneous second language interpreting.
- ◆ Audio teleconferencing.
- ◆ A 42" LCD panel or a 37" television for viewing by the jury when necessary.

The pages that follow describe the features of each component, how to request it, and how to use it.



CONTROLS



The Bench is the control center for all courtroom technology. Here the system is controlled by two touch screen control panels — one at the Clerk’s bench, the other at the Judge’s bench. The control panels manage the audio and video systems in the courtroom. In order to select an evidence source, one must request that source from the Clerk.

From the bench, the Judge can control all of the courtroom monitors, the audio and video sources from the lectern and the overall sound in the courtroom. At the touch of a single button, the Judge may turn off the evidence being presented, should he determine it not be made available to the jury, as well as mute every microphone in the courtroom.

MAKING USE OF THE TECHNOLOGY

The technology is available for any proceeding in which the technology would benefit the presentation of evidence. If you would like to make use of this technology, you will need to make arrangements a minimum of 5 working days in advance of any court proceedings. To assist you in this, contact information may be found at Appendix A in this guide. Appendix B is a checklist of available technology and notes for attorneys.





THE EVIDENCE PRESENTATION LECTERN

The evidence presentation lectern is equipped with a document camera, an annotation monitor, a microphone, a VCR, a PC, and auxiliary connections for other equipment. Let's deal first with ...

...The Document Camera ...

... more commonly called the “ELMO”, is not just for documents. You can place a document, a photograph, a negative, x-rays, or a 3 dimensional object on the document camera and have it display on all monitors in the courtroom. To display your item on the document camera, place it face up with whatever edge you wish to be at the bottom of the display closest to you.



If you look at the document camera, you'll notice control buttons on the front, right under your fingertips. What are they? What do they do? They're listed here ... but the shaded items are hands off.

Power	Powers up the document camera
Lamp	Toggles the lamp options (upper, lower and off)
Int/Ext	Allows users to plug in external components to the camera. Don't.
Freeze	Freezes the image on all monitors
AWC – Red/Blue Control	Adjusts the color.
Nega/Pos	Reverses the color. Background appears black while text appears white
Mode	Mode should remain XGA
IRIS	Adjusts the brightness.
Volume	Used only with an external component
Zoom	Zooms in (up) or out (down)
Focus	Adjusts camera settings to sharpen the image
Full/Scroll View	Allows you to see the entire document or move the image using the directional keys.



There are some limitations on the document camera. The camera cannot project a full 8-1/2 x 11 page in portrait orientation (the page being taller than it is wide). Also, the average text size in a letter is not large enough for clear viewing fully zoomed out so you can see the full page. For that reason, you may want to consider digitizing your documents.

To use the document camera, simply request that the Clerk select the document camera. Place your items on the camera and go.

THE VIDEO CASSETTE RECORDER . . .



... or VCR, will allow playback of videotaped evidence and testimony through the monitors. The controls for the VCR are in your hands — at your fingertips. It has the standard controls — play, fast forward, rewind, stop, pause and eject. The “Pause” feature allows a frame to be frozen for further examination. When presenting a video tape, please be sure you have the right video tape and that it is cued up to the correct position before you play it.



To use the VCR, simply request that the Clerk select the VCR. Please note, the VCR has an “Autoplay” feature which means that any video tape inserted into the machine will begin playing if the recording tab is broken off.

... ANNOTATION ...



The monitor on the lectern and the monitor on the witness stand are both capable of annotation — that is, counsel or witness may draw on, point to or highlight any document or other piece of evidence that is displayed through the system. It works best with still images, be they documents, pictures, or “freeze frame” from a VCR or DVD player.

To “annotate” on a piece of evidence, use your finger to draw firmly on the screen. Do not use a pen, pencil, stylus, or your fingernail. It won’t work (and the first 3 may damage the screen). It may not even work if you have very cold hands. To draw a line or circle, simply place your finger on the screen and drag it across, much as you would if you were drawing in the sand. To place an arrow on the screen, simply tap it in the appropriate place. It takes some practice so make arrangements to do so.

There are a few other features that come with the annotation screen. There is a palette of colors to choose from. To select a color, simply tap the lower left hand corner of the screen until the block of color flashing in the lower right hand corner is the color you’d like. (Useful if you have two people annotating on the same piece of evidence.)

To erase your last annotation, touch the upper right hand corner of the screen — it’s kind of like hitting the “backspace” on your computer. To clear the screen of annotations (probably a good thing before you change evidence), touch the lower right hand corner of the screen.



.. AUXILIARY INPUTS ..

The front of the evidence presentation lectern has inputs for other audio and video equipment. It has a 15-pin VGA connection for a computer, an S-video connection, RCA connections and a 1/8" miniplug audio connection. You could possibly plug in your own laptop, a video camera, an audio cassette player, a DVD player ... the list is endless. Please bring your own cables. The Court does not provide them.

... AUDIO TELECONFERENCING ...

Each courtroom is set for teleconferencing through the sound system. It is available for your use at the discretion of the Judge. If your expert witness cannot appear in court at the appointed date and time, the Judge may allow him or her to appear by telephone. If that is the case, the microphones and speakers in the courtroom will act as the telephone receiver and both sides of the conversation are broadcast through the sound system.



APPENDIX A

CONTACT INFORMATION

Chief Judge Mark E. Fuller

Courtroom 2-A

Courtroom Deputy: Kelli Gregg

334-954-3973

Judge Myron H. Thompson

Courtroom 2FMJ

Courtroom Deputy: Anthony Green

334-954-3952

Judge W. Keith Watkins

Courtroom 2-E

Courtroom Deputy: Ann Roy

334-954-3961

Senior Judge Truman M. Hobbs

Courtroom 2-D

Courtroom Deputy: Stan Long

334-954-3968

Senior Judge Ira B. DeMent

Courtroom 2-B

Courtroom Deputy: Kelli Gregg

334-954-3973

Senior Judge W. Harold Albritton

Courtroom 2-C

Courtroom Deputy: Elna Behrman

334-954-3710

Chief Magistrate Judge Susan Russ Walker

Courtroom 5-B

Courtroom Deputy: Joyce Taylor

334-954-3974

Magistrate Judge Charles S. Coody

Courtroom 4-B

Courtroom Deputy: Wanda Stinson

334-954-3971

Magistrate Judge Wallace Capel

Courtroom 5-A

Courtroom Deputy: Wanda Robinson

334-954-3977

Magistrate Judge Terry F. Moorer

Courtroom 4-A

Courtroom Deputy: Stan Long

334-954-3968

Training & Questions

Karlene Burkhard

334-954-3631

APPENDIX B

TECHNOLOGY REFERENCE

Technology Reference

Contact Courtroom Deputy Clerk with this information
no later than 5 working days prior to hearing.

Case/No: _____

Date/Time: _____

Judge/Courtroom: _____

Requesting Attorney: _____

Contact Name/Number: _____

Will be using:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Document Camera | <input type="checkbox"/> Touchscreen Annotation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Cassette Player | <input type="checkbox"/> Assisted Listening or Interpreter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio CD Player | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs ____ headsets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lectern PC | <input type="checkbox"/> Jury Monitors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Laptop | <input type="checkbox"/> Teleconferencing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will need power connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Conferencing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Comments: _____

NOTES for Attorneys:

1. Notification due to Courtroom Deputy Clerk no later than 5 working days prior to day required.
2. Personal laptops may be connected to the courtroom presentation system. This will require a standard 15 pin VGA cable for video and a standard line-in cable (1/8" phone plug to 1/8" phone plug) for audio.
3. Laptops attached to the courtroom system for presentation purposes require 1024x768 resolution for proper display.
4. Audio and video tapes should be cued to the correct starting point prior to insertion into court presentation system.
5. Trial presentation programs are not present on the built-in Lectern PC. Programs such as Visionary, Sanction and Trial Director may be loaded onto a personal laptop and used in the courtroom in that manner.